



Inside Ag

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Bug of the Month ***Oberea erythrocephala***



Leafy spurge is a highly invasive, deep rooted perennial weed that may cover meadows and grasslands with a dense stand of waist-high plants; choking out other vegetation and providing little or no forage for livestock.

In Colorado we now release two different kinds of insects to control the spurge invasion. The most commonly released agents are the leafy spurge flea beetles, but we are now releasing another type of beetle for spurge management, the red-headed leafy spurge stem borer, *Oberea erythrocephala*.

These are long horned beetles, named for their long antennae, and the adults are dark, elongate, active fliers while the larvae are pale yellow and spend their time within the stems of leafy spurge.



Adults are collected in June and July when they are actively seeking out spurge plants, where they lay eggs high in the stems. Larvae hatch and bore down through the stem to the root crown; seriously weakening the plant and stopping seed production. Populations of this insect rarely reach high numbers and so it is best used in combination with the spurge flea beetles.